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When resilience is not enough: Imagining novel approaches to supporting Black youth navigating racism

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Abstract

The narrative surrounding the impact racism has had on the well-being of Black youth has shifted across sociocultural and historical context. Early discourse around these topics were problem-saturated, focusing on deficits "within" Black youth. Over time, an important narrative shift occurred: greater attention was paid to the inherent assets of Black youth, their families, and communities, including how racial-ethnic protective factors such as racial socialization afforded them resilience. What resulted was decades of research seeking to understand the mechanisms that allow Black youth to *bounce back* in spite of racism-related adversity. Notwithstanding the viable practice and policy implications that have emerged from such inquiry, at what point does our focus on the resilience of Black youth – whether individual or multisystemic – fall short? It is with this question in mind that this paper challenges those committed to the optimal development of Black youth to consider yet another narrative shift: one that stands upon the legacy of cultural ecological frameworks and the seminal models underlying resilience research, and calls us toward not supporting Black youth's adaptation to racism, but toward collective efforts to transform our approach, *pushing back* against the perniciousness of racism.

Keywords: Black; racism; resilience; transformation; youth

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Introduction

Black youth in the United States have had to grow up with the unique challenge of navigating the textured terrain of American society's history with racism. Not only has the impact of individual and institutional level racism been detrimental to Black youth and their families, early academic and policy discourse also furthered racism's destruction by promoting a deficit perspective that wrongfully held Black families and communities responsible for experiences of adversity (Moynihan Report, 1965). Since then, research and policy have shifted to highlighting the inherent cultural strengths of Black families (McAdoo, 2002) which allows Black youth to persist even in the face of racism-related stressors and adversity (e.g., interpersonal and structural inequities, violence; Austin et al., 2022). Processes of resilience – now, an asset-centered, multidimensional construct for promoting psychosocial well-being in Black youth – represents a habituation to adversity, in which factors such as self-regulation, cultural strengths, social support, and efforts to cope undergird positive outcomes such as academic success and social mobility (Doan et al., 2022). Although resilience research is making a broader shift to integrate multisystemic efforts to combat adverse circumstances and events (e.g., climate change, COVID-19; Masten et al., 2021; Ungar & Theron, 2020), there is still a gap concerning how racism-related stressors can "come at a cost" to Black youth (Doan et al., 2022, p. 76). Thus, we posit an expansion to the contemporary models of resilience to combat the psychosocial impacts of racism, a unique stressor that influences the psychosocial well-being of Black youth at individual, familial, cultural, and communal levels (Harrell, 2000; Jones et al., 2020). As such, we integrate perspectives from psychology, social work, ecology, and public health to reimagine and consider what it would take to move away from examining contextual factors of resilience for Black youth and push toward a collective effort from systems and institutions to address the deleterious effects of racism with the power and structural influence they possess.

Answering resilience research's big three inquiries in the context of racism and Black youth

We began our attempt to interrogate a resilience-based approach to racism by situating Black youth and their experiences with racism within the broader resilience research literature. In recent masterful reviews outlining the evolution of resilience science, Masten (2021) and colleagues (Masten et al., 2021) remind the field that from the onset, the research on resilience attempted to understand and operationalize three major components: 1) what is the challenge, risk, or adversity? 2) how is successful adaptation defined? and 3)

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what are the factors (e.g., protective, promotive) or processes that account for this successful adaptation? In the subsequent sections, we seek to briefly answer questions number one and three before returning our attention to two towards the end.

Racism as a critical challenge, risk, and adversity for Black youth

Research on resilience, as well as developmental models such as Bronfenbrener's (1977) socio-ecological framework, highlight adverse environments and circumstances that may emerge generally for all youth. However, in considering the treatment of resilience for Black youth in particular, it is critical to highlight the deleterious role of racism. To understand racism's impact as a challenge, risk factor, and source of adversity for Black youth, we must first define and operationalize racism. Racism, as defined by Jones (1997), is "a system in which individuals or institutions intentionally or unintentionally exercise power against a racial group defined as inferior" (p.117) and is fueled by an "ideology of superiority and the practice of inequity" (Pieterse & Powell, 2016). Racism, by this definition, is a social construct that evolves, is perpetuated, and pervasively affects every aspect of our society, as well as individuals within that society. Unlike most stressors examined by resilience theories, including natural disasters – which are finite crises – or personally traumatic experiences, there are continuous and multiple levels upon which racism occurs, ranging from individual bias to inequitable policy enacted on the institutional and systemic levels (Jones, 2000). For the individual, racism exacts a unique impact on many parts of their development, including identity formation, character development, interpersonal development, and physical health (Clark et al., 1999; Hope et al., 2015). The deep rooted history and the social construction of racism provides a nuanced backdrop for how individuals are impacted by this multisystemic determinant, often leading to physical, psychological, and emotional trauma that transcends through generations (Carlson, 1997; Carter, 2007).

Jones et al. (2020) categorized racism into three main categories: *instrumental* (i.e. involving critical development tasks), *interpersonal* (i.e. interactions with other people), and *institutional* (i.e. involving systems and policies). Through an instrumental lens, racism impacts Black children and adolescents by them being perceived as older and more dangerous (Goff et al., 2014), receiving less culturally affirming early education and childcare experiences (James & Iruka, 2018), and experiencing harsher treatment, grading, and punishment due to their race from their teachers (Cogburn et al., 2011). Interpersonally, Black youth experience direct encounters of racism (e.g., from peers; Seaton & Yip, 2009) as well as bearing witness to vicarious racism involving caregivers (Dominguez et al., 2008) and peers (Tynes et al., 2019), with these experiences occurring both in person and online. Black youth, and teens in particular, encounter substantial institutional experiences with racism, such as policies that result in higher interactions with and trauma by police (e.g., "stop and frisk; Brunson & Miller, 2006) and school administrators. Racism also differentially impacts Black youth across gender. Perpetuated stereotypes around race and gender and their intersections often lead to more negative reactions to racial discrimination (Chavous et al., 2008). Black males are often stereotypically deemed as aggressive or intellectually lacking athletes (Chavous et al., 2004; Swanson et al., 2003). These stereotypes often lead to Black male youth receiving more negative treatment in schools including harsher discipline, more criticism and more social exclusion compared to their peers (Davis, 2003; Noguera, 2003). Similarly, parental racial socialization messages often include more messages around racial barriers and alertness to racial discrimination for Black boys compared to Black girls in reaction to the societal stereotypes of Black males (Coard et al., 2004). While Black girls also report experiencing discriminatory or negative treatment from valued others (e.g., teachers) due to their race, scholars speculate that Black girls have more negative reactions to discriminatory treatment due to more frequent socialization messages focused on relationships, connectedness to community, and approval of others as opposed to messages preparing them for such racial discrimination (Chavous et al., 2008). This may also lead Black girls to develop negative approaches to their academics (e.g., underperforming) to avoid having such negative interactions and treatment from their teachers and peers (Grantham & Ford, 1998). These differential impacts of racism on girls and boys in adolescence can have implications throughout their lifetime.

The literature has expanded theories and models to account for the influence of racism on resilience across youth development. Both Garcia Coll et al.'s (1996) integrative model and Spencer et al.'s (1997) phenomenal variant of ecological systems theory (PVEST) extend Bronfenbrener's socio-ecological model in ways that consider the unique realities youth of color must navigate. By incorporating aspects of intersectionality and developmental identity theory, these theories put the vulnerability of youth into the context of their social position and experiences that are most often linked to systems of oppression and power structures (e.g., Velez & Spencer, 2018). Moreover, in addition to viewing racism as a detrimental factor to positive outcomes for Black youth, these models center how others within the ecosystem (e.g., adaptive culture, family, social support) can mitigate the stress and vulnerability that racism portends.

Racial-ethnic protective factors for Black youth experiencing racism

Of note, scholars committed to the healthy psychosocial development of Black youth have spent decades elucidating the factors that protect Black youth against the noxious nature of racism in its multiple forms. Even from the earliest conceptualizations of Black youth development (e.g., PVEST, triple quandary; Boykin & Toms, 1985), racial-ethnic protective factors were named as critical for understanding Black youth resilience and successful adaptation. Three racial-ethnic protective factors have been distinguished as particularly salient for Black youth: (1) racial identity development, (2) the endorsement of a cultural/Africentric worldview, and (3) racial socialization (Jones & Neblett, 2016; Neblett et al., 2012).

Racial identity

Research on racial identity development among Black youth often contend with Sellers et al.'s (1998) multidimensional model of racial identity, which encompasses markers of racial centrality (i.e., level of importance ascribed to one's race), private/public racial regard (i.e., perceptions held about one's race), and ideology (i.e., various perceptions of how members of one's race should act). When developed in a manner that favors a strong, positive racial identity, these three dimensions coagulate to form the protective barrier against racism. For instance, a strong racial identity has been shown to interrupt the association between racial discrimination and poor mental health (Brody et al., 2006). Conceptual models of successful adaptation to adversity note that an awareness around others' (i.e., public racial regard) and one's own (i.e.,

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private racial regard) perceptions about their racial group brings along with it high self-esteem (Brody et al., 2006), use of effective coping strategies (Wong et al., 2003), and a lower likelihood of attributing instances of discrimination to the self (Seaton et al., 2010; Sellers et al., 2006) – all circumventing the deleterious impact of racism on Black youth well-being.

Africentric worldview

In addition to racial identity, the literature also points to the endorsement of an Africentric worldview as a significant protective factor against racism. Africentric worldview refers to a broad system of beliefs, values, expectation, and behaviors of those part of the African Diaspora (i.e., a collection of communities with African ancestry) to make meaning of their immediate contexts (Grills, 2004). Africentric worldview includes several different dimensions, all of which originate from key cultural aspects of African heritage: spirituality (belief in a higher being or force); collectivism (natural reliance on cooperation); time orientation (time flexibility as well as a reverence of past, present, and future); orality (preference for information shared orally); sensitivity to affect and emotional cues (acknowledgment of others' emotional state); verve and rhythm (engagement in creative and rhythmic behavior); and balance and harmony (balance of one's mental, physical, and spiritual states (Grills, 2004; Jones & Neblett, 2016). A popular endorsement of Africentric worldview is also apparent in the Nguzo Saba, or the cultural celebration of Kwanzaa, in which principles such as unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, and faith are emphasized. In Jones and Neblett's (2016) systematic review, Africentric worldview through Nguzo Saba was an essential component of psychosocial prevention and intervention programs that promoted principles spanning from conflict resolution to finding a path to one's purpose (Ferguson, 1998; Greene et al., 1995). Not only has Africentric worldview been linked to a host of promotive factors for Black youth such as self-esteem (Constantine et al., 2006; Thomas et al., 2003), academic adjustment (Hatter & Ottens, 1998), and positive racial identity (Thomas et al., 2003), it has also been deemed protective against negative psychological and physiological outcomes associated with racism-related stress. Unfortunately, traditional school practices, media portrayals, and societal views do not have a history of promoting racial identity or Africentric worldview for Black youth; rather, these factors are typically tended to by a process called racial socialization.

Racial socialization

Racial socialization (RS) is a process through which family members and/or caregivers transmit implicit and explicit messages regarding the meaning of their race and ethnicity and help youth cope with racial discrimination and other racism-related stressors (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Boykin & Toms, 1985; Hughes et al., 2006; Stevenson, 1995). Researchers (e.g., Gaskin et al., 2013; Hughes et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006) have identified different dimensions of RS: messages of cultural socialization/racial pride (teaching racial-ethnic heritage and history and promoting racial-ethnic pride), preparation for bias (emphasizing inequalities between racial groups and providing coping strategies for such discrimination), egalitarianism (highlighting the concept of equality and harmony that can exist between racial groups), self-worth (prioritizing individual traits as opposed to traits associated to racial membership), promotion of mistrust (encouraging caution when interacting with other cultures, specifically White majority cultures), negative messages (sharing messages that stereotype and disparage the Black race), and silence about race (failing to talk about issues or matters pertaining to race). Many of these RS dimensions have been linked to a number of promotive effects for Black youth such as better academic performance (Brown et al., 2009), psychological well-being and socioemotional adjustment (Neblett et al., 2008), and racial identity (Hughes et al., 2009). RS is also a multifaceted protective factor against racial discrimination; for instance, when coalesced, messages of cultural socialization and preparation for bias have been shown to buffer the relationship between racial discrimination and Black youth's perceived stress and problem behaviors (Neblett et al., 2008).

While the bevy of research on RS has centered around the content of caregiver RS, scholars have contributed more recent research spanning from theoretical frameworks such as the racial encounter coping appraisal and socialization theory (RECAST; Anderson & Stevenson, 2019) to multilevel and bidirectional transmission (peer, media, school) of RS messages (Golden et al., 2021; Saleem & Byrd, 2021; Wang & Benner, 2016). RECAST calls on competency in delivering RS messages as a means for caregivers to know and understand the most effective delivery of RS messages to youth by taking into account their attitudes, behaviors, and reactions during discriminatory racial encounters (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019). Thus, RECAST asserts that caregivers being skilled and confident in RS delivery promotes greater racial coping skills in youth - a speculative, but supported factor in explaining successful adaptation to adversity for Black youth (Neblett et al., 2012). While studies using the RECAST model have focused on caregiver competency in assessing the quality of RS communication to youth (Jones et al., 2022), others have explored the impact of RS from various contextual levels such as peers, media platforms (Golden et al., 2021; Wang & Benner, 2016) and school transmission (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). Recent studies demonstrate the bidirectional nature of RS communication among these levels, in that peers reported using media as a catalyst and prompt for RS - supporting a steady flow of communication from one peer to another (Golden et al., 2021). Likewise, Saleem and Byrd (2021) proposed a conceptual framework that positions teachers and staff, peers, and school policies and practices as key transmitters of RS in the school context. Taken together, it is evident that research on RS processes has shown itself to be "good soil" for growing the racial factors of resilience and successful adaptation, and, importantly, through the incorporation of other individuals or systems to promote such processes for Black youth.

Defining Black youth's "successful" adaptation from racism: resilience science's evolution and limitations

As Masten (2021) and others have noted, a critical question in resilience research is illuminating and defining what successful adaptation from a challenge or stressor looks like in the lives of youth. As we consider this question with the adversity of racism in mind, we find it instructive to pair our answer with a discussion on the progression and evolution of resilience science.

Historical focus on individual traits

In framing our argument for an alternative approach to supporting the mental health and well-being of Black youth in the context of racism, it is necessary to begin by outlining the ways in which resilience has historically been applied to these young people. Resilience was considered as a way of phenomenologically

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understanding how youth achieved positive psychosocial (e.g., academic, emotional, psychological) outcomes despite developing in adverse environments and being exposed to potentially deleterious circumstances (Luthar et al., 2000; Troy & Mauss, 2011). This "dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (Luthar et al., 2000, p. 543), has led researchers over the past several decades to identify and isolate person-centered factors (e.g., self-regulation, grit, racial identity, self-competence, academic self-efficacy; Austin et al., 2022; Duckworth & Gross, 2014; Moffitt et al., 2011) that seem most likely to protect against negative outcomes. As such, the lion's share of resilience literature to date has congregated at the individual level. Masten et al. (2021) describes four major waves of resilience research with the first three focused on identifying individual attributes that separate those who did well versus those that did poorly in the context of risk (wave 1), explaining why certain individual attributes lead to better adaptation (wave 2), and targeting the development of these attributes to promote adjustment during adversity (wave 3). Here, it is evident that much of the research on resilience (i.e., three out of the four waves) at the individual level has persisted despite arguments for a multisystem approach, but why? Who does it serve for resilience to be studied as an individual trait? The persistence of research emphasizing grit, hardiness, and self-regulation all maps onto Western ideals of individualism, which consistently places the onus of hardship and or success on the individual rather than considering the multiple societal and historical levels that are primarily at fault.

However, as the field evolved and the literature on resilience expanded (wave 4), researchers have come to recognize the more prominent role of external factors on a child's resilience through development (Luthar et al., 2000). There has also been a shift to focus on the processes that protect the development of youth from risk exposure instead of the traditional approach of focusing on individual protective factors (Cowen et al., 1997; Luthar & Cushing, 2002). One key model in supporting this shift from individual to ecological can be traced to Bronfenbrenner's (1977) socio-ecological framework, which describes a child's development as a set of complex relationships within a concentric system that includes various levels of environmental influence from and between immediate family, school, cultural values and laws. The various levels of influence not only interact with the child but also interact with each other at different levels, which might explain the extent to which the child, depicted in the center of the model, is protected from nefarious threats to optimal psychosocial well-being.

Multisystemic approaches: a welcome addition to the discourse

The work of Masten (2021), Masten et al. (2021), and Ungar and Theron (2020) has marked an important departure from the individual focus of resilience to a multisystemic one. An important component of understanding resilience from a multisystemic approach is giving attention to the reciprocal interactions across multiple system levels evident in Bronfenbrenner's (1977) socio-ecological model. An individual child, depicted as the focal point of the socio-ecological model, engages with a number of systems, but primarily with family systems that include their caregivers, siblings, and other immediate members of the home. As that child develops, engagement with other families, friends, school, and community becomes more evident. Furthermore, that same child is also impacted, albeit indirectly, by other systems such as a caregiver's workplace and state government. One may speculate that if these dynamic multisystem processes are evident throughout a child's development, then the same can be applied to advanced resilience science. To this end, Masten et al. (2021) offers a new definition of resilience: "the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully through multisystem processes to challenges that threaten the function, survival, or development of the system" (p. 524). Similarly, Ungar and Theron (2020) assert that resilience is not an isolated individual quality; rather, it is a quality that leverages access to cultural resources and support at multiple levels to manage adversity.

Why Black youth deserve more than successful adaption to racism

Centering the processes of resilience available to an individual in the face of systemic-level problems like racism is insufficient; systemic adversities and trauma need to be prevented and reduced, thereby lessening the load that processes of resilience are often employed to mitigate (Brown et al., 2019; Dankwa-Mullen et al., 2010). For example, public health evidence that supports focusing on individual-level behaviors, such as eating balanced and healthy meals, is ineffective to address nutrient deficiencies in youth without addressing accessibility of fresh healthy food options (Singh et al., 2010). Black youth, on the whole, are more likely to live in poverty and less likely to have access to quality education (e.g., high schools that offer college-ready courses) compared to White youth (Charles et al., 2022; US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014), yet are expected to pull themselves up by their "proverbial bootstraps" to both achieve individually and compete collectively. This colloquial expression – to elevate one's social positioning without assistance – insinuates that there are no systemic barriers in place that prevent success for Black youth such as a lack of sufficient investments in public schools (Darling-Hammond, 2018), safe and affordable neighborhoods and housing reinforced by historic laws of segregation (Jargowsky, 2016), and the criminalization of Black boys in school (Rothstein, 2017). With systemic racism and structured inequities present in our society, resilience among Black youth will never overcome these oppressive forces due to individual behaviors alone.

In addition to varying levels of racialized experiences, Black youth are also currently being exposed to a multitude of societal issues such as exaggerated effects from the COVID-19 global pandemic (Anderson, Heard-Garris, et al., 2021), economic uncertainty, and videos and commentary of unjust experiences of racism through media exposure (Harriman et al., 2020; Parker et al., 2021; Stewart et al., 2019). The experience of being subjected to racial discrimination through social media interactions or witnessing others' experiences with racism and violence is unique for Black youth of today and is a growing population-level public health concern (Cooper & Fullilove, 2016; Tynes et al., 2019). In addition to experiencing vicarious exposure to racism online, some Black youth are on the frontlines fighting against racism through protests, education, and activism (Anyiwo et al., 2023), taking on a considerable amount of the resistance against racism and oppression, infringing on their ability to devote time and energy to other developmentally relevant activities. A number of positive or protective processes have been documented by engaging in activism (e.g., development of problem-solving coping mechanisms; Brashers et al., 2002), yet a growing body of evidence is unearthing the toll that this activism takes on the psychological and physical wellness of young people (Hope et al., 2018). This double-

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edged sword demonstrates how prior conceptualizations of resilience miss the damage that may be exacted when Black youth take up the charge to fight back against systems that are disproportionately fashioned against them. As such, the new generation of resilience research must eliminate the undue responsibility for Black youth to fight for the right to be young and grow old; rather, they deserve specific solutions that are necessary for their optimal development.

Where we are and where we need to go: moving from coping and adaptation to agency and transformation

Viewing racism as a multifaceted system that impacts youth development in multiple domains and across development, Jones et al. (2020) place this unique stressor directly in conversation with two of the most prevalent debates in the literature concerning the construct of resilience: whether resilience is (1) defined as a positive developmental response to a singular negative life event or compounded negative events or (2) demonstrated through excelling in one domain or excelling in multiple domains (Luthar et al, 1993, 2000; Tolan, 1996). For Black youth navigating the adversity and trauma of interpersonal and systemic racism on a consistent basis (Nicolas et al., 2008), one could speculate that resilience is no longer a characteristic or choice, but rather a forced act to live with, push through, and excel to survive. The ways researchers have studied and discussed resilience, particularly within the context of Black communities, may therefore sensationalize the survival and endurance of these communities, oftentimes not leading to actual or sustained efforts to eradicate the enduring effects of racism. It calls the humanity of the individuals experiencing the race-based trauma into question by essentially viewing them as rubber bands being pulled to their limits and remaining intact despite severe weathering, all while receiving little to no reinforcement or, better yet, coverage, from the systems and institutions that hold the power to prevent the erosion in the first place (Anderson, Jones et al., 2021).

Our perspective here mirrors discourse by prior scholars. Bottrell (2009) notes that so-called mainstream approaches to resilience, particularly through an individualistic lens, "may shift the emphasis from positive adaptation despite adversity to positive adaptation *to* adversity" (p. 334). We contend that such an approach, *adaptation to* racism, has been rampant for far too long. We assert, as we outlined in the foregoing section, that Black youth should not have to adapt to racism. In fact, we contend that in some ways, our willingness to allow Black youth to adapt to racism is more deleterious than desirable. Again, as Masten (2021) rightly notes, resilience is "the dynamic capacity of a complex adaptive system to respond successfully to challenges that threaten the function, survival, or development of the system" (p. 155). This begs the question, however, of what happens when we consider that racism is also a *complex, adaptive system*? What does it mean to imagine that racism, as such a system, responds "*successfully*" to our current and historical attempts to thwart its survival? As we have outlined in previous discourse (see Anderson & Jones, 2021; Anderson et al., 2021), the system of racism is savvy and virulent. Thus, responding to racism in the same way – by asking Black youth to be resilient – represents a form of systematic insanity, or doing the same thing and expecting a different outcome. An illustrative and contemporaneous example includes the machine learning algorithms found within powerful tools such as ChatGPT. This predictive text relies on script from large bodies of knowing, being, and doing and generates a response that is aligned with such prior input. It can therefore "learn" the ways to both embody and respond to discourse. While youth response to racial stressors has changed over time and proved beneficial in many regards, racism has also been able to study and learn from these efforts and waged new strategies and tactics in response, therefore dictating the input and the output of processes with which to contend. Laws enacted in 2022 and 2023 which point to fears around discussion of racism within classrooms or in libraries benefitted from understanding the fears of voters in the 2016 election, that is, the evolution of racial policy learned from the hope of the 2008 and 2012 elections (Fuller, 2017). If we rely solely on individuals to fight against these larger machines, we will be woefully unprepared when that machine is stronger and bigger than even the programmers intended it to be.

Though we acknowledge that a multisystem approach provides a welcomed improvement from the individual perspective, we express concern that this merely shifts from Black boys needing to have joy and Black girls needing to be magic, to Black families, Black teachers, and Black communities needing to be exceptional, all with only the mere promise of adapting to the nefariousness of racism. Holding these perspectives then, what *is* our recommendation for where we must ascend in consideration of supporting the optimal well-being of Black youth beset by racial prejudice, discrimination, and oppression? What follows is our attempt to begin answering this question, knowing that our response will be incomplete, and hoping that it will encourage those reading to also consider a world where adaptation is not the end goal.

Of note, we organize our charge by re-centering the goals of resilience research from a psychological perspective, while also integrating the recommendations and considerations made by scholars in adjoining fields of social work, ecology, and public health. Masten (2021) reminds us that an ultimate goal of resilience research through a psychological perspective was to better understand positive adaptation in the context of adversity as a means of informing practices and policy. This begs the question of which are the practices and policies that need to emerge from our understanding of Black youth resilience in the face of racism? Although it is tempting to argue for deepening our understanding of practices such as racial socialization (Jones et al., 2021) and racial identity (Rivas-Drake et al., 2022), or even elevating policies that affirm racial pride in educational spaces (Iruka et al., 2021), we maintain that such practices and policies are insufficient on their own. Rather, we offer a question from the field of social work, akin to what Bottrell (2009) posed in their critique of individual approaches to resilience:

> *How much adversity should resilient individuals endure before social arrangements rather than individuals are targeted for intervention? (p. 335)*

We find this question particularly important to consider in the context of Black youth's navigation of racism. For instance, we can conceptualize the cascading impacts of racism, such that individual experiences of racism (e.g., being called a racial epithet) intersect with institutional experiences of racism (e.g., being unduly suspended for responding verbally to the peer levying the epithet). We also know through the conceptual work of Elder et al. (2003) and the empirical work of Jones et al. (2023) that Black youth experience racism in dynamic, "linked lives" ways, such that both experiences with and sequelae associated with racism travels in families, communities, and across generations. From this perspective then, even adopting a multisystemic resilience framework may omit the reality that Black parents, siblings, neighbors, educators, and clergy are similarly attempting to adapt despite the adversities of racism.

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Masten (2021) invokes several stakeholders in the research on resilience, including clinicians, educators, research institutes, and philanthropic foundations. Of note, each of these constituents, it can be argued, wields significant relative power in the fight against racism compared to the Black youth experiencing it. Thus, we would submit that the social arrangements that upheld racism as a nefarious threat to Black youth be targeted for intervention, and invite the various stakeholders in positions of power offering the first lines of intervening rather than Black youth or their families. It is important to note that our call is not unique. Rather, it joins and aligns with a recent call for paradigmatic shifts in the approach to resilience as utilized in health services research and public health (Suslovic & Lett, 2023). Similar to these authors, we agree with the limitations of a "resilience as treatment" framework, and elevate the consideration that resilience represents an "adverse event" and "scar tissue" as a result of structural harm, often to the most marginalized, such as Black youth (p. 2).

In imagining alternative approaches to resilience in the face of racism, notions of agency (i.e., a capacity for action) and transformation (i.e., substantial change) loom large. Of note, agency is seen through a collective and relational, rather than individualistic lens (Lister, 2015). Moreover, Lister (2015), in their discussion of poverty, an apt social system when considering racism, offers multiple forms of agency, viewed through two axes. The first axis concerns a continuum between everyday and strategic forms of action. The second axis concerns a continuum between personal and more political or collective forms of action. As such, Lister argues that actions in response to adversity can be *personal*X*everyday*, *collective*X*everyday*, *personal*X*strategic*, and *collective*X*strategic*. Indeed, Brown and Westaway (2011) in their discussion of environmental and climate change offer a useful taxonomy, which employs this axial approach. As seen in Figure 1, Brown and Westaway utilized the aforementioned axes to draw distinctions among coping (*personal*X*everyday*), self-help (*collective*X*everyday*), adaptation (*personal*X*strategic*), and transformation (*collective*X*strategic*). Although both coping and adaptation are familiar in the psychological discourse on resilience, we wish to briefly define transformation as offered by Hackman and St Clair (2012). According to these scholars, transformation is a process of altering the fundamental attributes of a system, which can include (infra)structures and institutions, finances, attitudes and practices, policies, and power dynamics.

In the consideration of Black youth's navigation of racism as adversity, we focus on the distinctions among coping, adaptation, and transformation. We conceptualize Black youth's ability to read, recast, and resolve racially stressful encounters in their everyday lives (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019); to employ both emotion- and problem-focused approaches to experiences with racism (Anderson et al., 2019); and to adopt culturally relevant practices as key indicators that these youth demonstrate a remarkable ability to *cope* with racism. We also concede that the impressive, nearly four-decade research on racial socialization as a process and a practice, centering content and competency (Hughes et al., 2006; Jones et al., 2021; Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020), as well as the companion legacy of positive racial identity development (Rivas-Drake et al., 2022) serve as preeminent examples that Black youth and the families from whence they come are able to *adapt* to racism. And yet, we contend that coping and adaptation are insufficient, and that, ultimately, transformation – fundamental changes to navigating racism – is not only what is needed, but is what is due Black babies, children, and adolescents.

Figure 1. A taxonomy of response to climate change. Reprinted from Brown & Westaway, 2011.

Conclusion

We conclude by reflecting on Masten's (2021) question concerning resilience: "What makes a difference?" (p. 156). Indeed, concerning Black youth navigating racism, how would a model(s) of *resisting* racism in a multisystemic and collective manner look differently than the individual and multisystemic *resilience* approaches for Black youth? How might that interdisciplinary model or models differentially respond to the complex and involving system that is racism, not allowing it to run roughshod over Black youth, but rather, offer avenues for thwarting racism's attempts at continued resilience and existence? And ultimately, how would such a model(s) make the difference? As scholars and practitioners concerned with social and behavioral health, we posit this needed framework and practice would optimally support the psychosocial well-being and thriving of Black youth, in turn supporting the well-being and thriving of our society more broadly. Importantly, however, the solution would not rest in any individual system. It requires the understanding, interlocking, and retooling of each system to ensure that the psychosocial outcomes of youth are optimal. As humans, organizations, and societies come together to actively eradicate racism from its systems, it is critical to move lockstep in the provision of resources and resistance across systems. As a practical example, when "busing" opportunities are offered to Black youth to provide them with exposure to a new educational experience, are we simultaneously reassessing: a) asbestos-free buildings and residences; b) tax-based educational policies; c) outdated pedagogy, and d) beliefs that by virtue of Black youth being around youth who do not look like them, they will have optimal outcomes? Are we providing identity-based support for their out-of-school time to ensure they get all of the benefits of being around people who share their identity? In total, are we thinking, behaving, and planning collectively or focusing solely within our silo or for individual youth?

In our acknowledgment that even our own sub-discipline of racial socialization is insufficient in tackling this gargantuan task, we must also shine a light on the challenges to move forward conjointly if scholars across disciplines are not citing and or reading each other's work. In preparation for this paper, we were astonished by the wealth of thought on resilience outside of the social and behavioral sciences, yet also amazed at the lack of cross-disciplinary acknowledgment of this work. Future research will require these multidisciplinary teams of scholars across "levels and

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lanes" such that eminent scholars from psychology to ecology should all join forces for this wicked problem. Moving collectively and en masse is required as we advance multisystemic resilience theory and practice for Black youth in the next generation until there is no racialized stressor for which Black youth need to be resilient.

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